

## USE OF PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN SCHOOLS

### Background

The Division believes it is important to promote a focused and productive learning environment. The Division therefore aims to ensure that all students and staff understand and respect the guidelines regarding the use of cell phones and other electronic devices and social media within the school premises.

As per the Government of Alberta, Department of Education, Ministerial Order (#014/2024)

*WHEREAS the use of personal mobile devices in schools can be a source of distractions that can negatively impact children's and students' mental health, engagement, and learning;*

*WHEREAS students are entitled to welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that respect diversity and nurture a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self, and the use of personal mobile devices can be used to harm, bully, and otherwise compromise this environment;*

*WHEREAS the Government of Alberta wishes to improve learning outcomes by supporting a distraction-free environment that promotes children's and students' wellbeing and limits opportunities for bullying. (Reference Alberta Education, Office of the Minister, June 20, 2024)*

***Division schools and their staff are not responsible for any damage to or theft of a student's mobile device, therefore, students must properly secure and take care of their own devices.***

### Definitions

*Personal Mobile Device* - includes, but is not limited to any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate with or access the internet such as:

- cell phone;
- tablet;
- laptop;
- Chromebook;
- smartwatch;
- gaming device (including electronic toys).

*Instructional Time* - refers to the time allocated in the school day or school year specifically dedicated to delivering planned educational programs and activities; this includes guest or visitor presentations. This time is focused on teaching students the prescribed curriculum and achieving learning outcomes set by Alberta Education. It typically excludes breaks, recess, lunchtime, and other non-instructional activities.

*Social Media* - refers to digital platforms and tools that enable users to create, share, and interact with content and information online. These platforms include but are not limited to Facebook, X, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok.

## Procedures

### 1. General Responsibilities

- 1.1 Students may not use personal mobile devices during instructional time. All personal mobile devices must be kept in silent mode or powered off during instructional time and stored in students' backpacks, bags, or locked lockers.

### 2. Social Media

- 2.1 Students and staff cannot access social media on wireless school networks or school devices.

### 3. Limited Use Exceptions

- 3.1 Limited use of personal mobile devices must be permitted, as determined by a principal or equivalent, for health or medical reasons or to support social learning needs. This must be documented within a Student Support Plan (SSP) as indicated and supported by a medical professional.
- 3.2 Limited use of personal mobile devices may be permitted for educational or other purposes as determined by a principal or equivalent.
- 3.3 Limited access to social media may be permitted, as determined by a principal or equivalent in consultation with the Assistant Superintendent - Education Services.

### 4. Student Responsibilities

- 4.1 Abide by the guidelines outlined in this administrative procedure ensuring that devices are in silent mode or powered off, and properly stored during class time.
- 4.2 Students need to be familiar with Administrative Procedure 135 - *Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools*.
- 4.3 Students should discuss with their parents/guardians the responsible use of their personal mobile devices while at school.

### 5. Teachers and Staff

- 5.1 Staff are expected to model proper mobile device use and behaviour during instructional time.
- 5.2 At the beginning of the year, staff must be familiar with and review this administrative procedure with students.
- 5.3 Staff will remind students of this procedure regularly and apply it consistently.
- 5.4 Teachers must review and include a link to Administrative Procedure 135 on Grade 7-12 course outlines.
- 5.6 Principals will review both Administrative Procedure 138 *Social Media* and *Social Media Guidelines for Schools/Departments* (Appendix 138) with all staff on an annual basis.

### 6. Parents/Guardians

- 6.1 Support the implementation of Administrative Procedure 135 by discussing the importance of minimizing distractions and ensuring their children comply with the guidelines.
- 6.2 In emergencies or when time is of the essence, parents/guardians should contact the school through the main office phone.

## 7. School Administration

- 7.1 Communicate the student code of conduct (AP 350) to students, parents/guardians, and staff, and provide support for its enforcement.
- 7.2 Address any violations following the progressive disciplinary actions included in this administrative procedure.

## 8. Progressive Discipline

### 8.1 First Offence

- 8.1.1 Verbal warning and reminder of the procedure by the staff member.

### 8.2 Second Offence

- 8.2.1 Verbal warning to the student and notification to the parents/guardians by the teacher; infraction is recorded.

### 8.3 Third Offence

- 8.3.1 Meeting with the student, and school administration. Notification to the parents/guardians by the teacher; infraction is recorded.

- 8.3.2 Additional consequences may include:

- i) Personal electronics plan/contract,
- ii) Confiscation of the device,
- iii) Detention,
- iv) Loss of privileges (teams, clubs, field trips),
- v) Other consequences as determined by the school administration.

### 8.4 Continued Violations

- 8.4.1 Persistent non-compliance will result in further disciplinary actions, with measures as deemed appropriate by the school administration. Consequences may include:

- i) Further loss of privileges (teams, clubs, field trips),
- ii) Suspension,
- iii) Restricting the student's ability to bring a device to school,
- iv) Other consequences as determined by the school administration.

## 9. Communication of Administrative Procedure

- 9.1 This administrative procedure will be communicated to students, parents/guardians, and staff through various channels, including school newsletters, the division website and school websites, and during school assemblies/meetings.

References: Government of Alberta, Department of Education, Ministerial Order (#014/2024)

Related APs: Social Media (AP 138)  
Technology/(Network/Internet) Acceptable Use Agreement (AP 140)  
Student Code of Conduct (AP 350)

Appendix: Social Media Guidelines for Schools/Departments (Appendix 138)

Forms: Social Media Account Request (138-1)  
Technology (Network/Internet) Acceptable Use Agreement – Students K-12 (140-1) *part of online registration*  
Technology (Network/Internet) Acceptable Use Agreement - Network Users (140-3)